

THE ANNA HOWARD SHAW CENTER NEWSLETTER

Boston University School of Theology

Volume 16 Issue 1

Winter 1999

As we worked on the wording for the paragraph for the Women and the Word brochure recently, I was struck by one of the women who will be with us in March. She talked about how, in truly listening to the diverse and passionate voices of women, we find our own voice in a broader context than before. Truly listening and engaging women moves us from the narrow confines of our backgrounds and moves us beyond our ignorance, our stereotypes, and our fears of that which is different.

From The Director

Margaret Wiborg

This fall, the Shaw Center is beginning to step out on this kind of journey. As we said in our statement of action and confession last year, we know we will make mistakes along the way. How I would like to think that our mistakes will be the kind that we can laugh about together, how I hope they will be mistakes that do not deeply wound or offend. How clear I am that those hopes are not promised!

We have begun by being more diverse in our leadership.

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Fall Retreat '99

Pauletta Lehn is a first-year MTS student. She participated in the annual Shaw Center retreat a few weeks after arriving in Boston from Nebraska. Here

May I be filled with loving kindness.
May I be well.
May I be peaceful and at ease.
May I be happy.



Shaw Center Women attending this Fall's Retreat pause on Saturday morning for a group photo.

are her impressions.

The theme of the retreat was *Finding Sacred Spaces: Within and Without*. Margaret Wiborg introduced us to an ancient Buddhist prayer. She prefaced it with the question: "For what else do we need to ask?"

The retreat was both enriching and empowering. The women shared a wealth of experience and tradition, which we thoroughly appreciated.

On the first night, we gathered to share our items of sacred worth. These items included a chalice from

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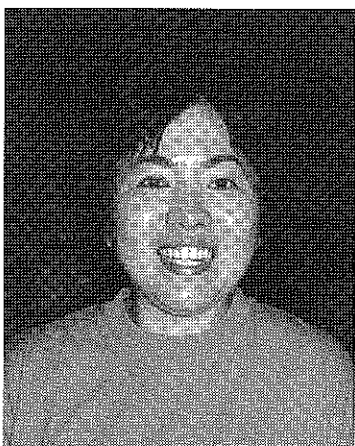
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Meet the Shaw Center Scholar

Lai Fan Wong (sounds like "life is fun") is my name, and I truly believe that "life is fun." I grew up in a Chinese family and lived all my life in Hong Kong, before coming to the United States in 1997.

I became a Christian when I was a child. As the first Christian in my family, I prayed for more than twenty years for my family to receive Jesus Christ as their personal savior. Thank God for the answers to my prayers. One by one, over the years, my grandmother, father, mother, brother, sister-in-law, and nieces were all converted to Christianity.



I have always enjoyed school. I studied oriental literature and language (Chinese and Japanese) as an undergraduate. Then I taught in a Christian secondary school, in service to the Lord. After teaching for two years, I developed a great interest in education, so I returned to the university to study for my graduate diploma in education. With my professor's encouragement, I then pursued graduate studies in counseling while I continued teaching. I also worked as a volunteer in a Christian counseling center. Now an experienced language teacher and counselor, I began to teach in the Department of Education in a Christian university.

As the only daughter in my family, I was greatly influenced by the culture of

my father's hometown, Shunde, a place famous for independent women. Early in my life, I began to examine the issue of women's self-esteem and personal expectations. I have always felt proud of being a woman, but there are few models distinct from the traditional definitions in my culture. I was educated for twelve years in a Protestant school that was established in memory of the first female missionary to China. The beginnings of the women's movement in China were influenced by Christianity. *I believe that Christianity can still be a motivating force to arouse women's consciousness and liberate us from the sin of sexism.*

About five years ago, I received Jesus' call and decided to prepare myself to enter ordained ministry. I studied for my MDiv in Hong Kong. I thank God for giving me the opportunity to attend international women's meetings and join educational team visits to overseas partner churches and women's organizations, which helped clarify my decision to focus on women's ministry. My interest in integrating psychology and theology with women's issues led me to study for an MTS at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Chicago two years ago. Again, by the clear leading of the Holy Spirit, I came to Boston University School of Theology to study for my ThD in pastoral psychology and spirituality.

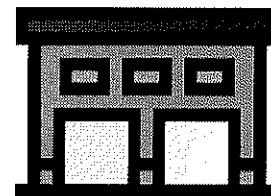
I am glad to know more about Anna Howard Shaw and her pioneering work, through the Shaw Center. I hope my experience here can stimulate and encourage me to contribute more to the development of women of color. I am greatly interested in improving the quality of services for women, expanding the vision of the church for women, and facilitating women's appreciation of their talents and their lives. I am excited to know that I have so much to do, and *I am looking forward to having even more fun doing this!*

Thank God for leading me in Its Way — we Chinese have a special pronoun for God, which is neither male, nor female — and for granting me the freedom to be who I am.

The School For Congregational Development

In the face of tremendous cultural change, diversity, and the complexity of public life, congregations are tempted to cloister themselves, turn inward, and give up on any creative involvement with the wider community.

This year's **School for Congregational Development program** focuses on developing "public congregations" — faith communities that understand salvation, evangelism, ministry, and the Christian life as a dynamic — even subversive, engagement with the world, through witness, service, formation, and outreach.



Whether your interest is in new church development, congregational transformation, or discovering new strategies for seeing your congregation better engage its community with the gospel, this summer's workshops offer something just for you!

Contact the Center for Congregational Research and Development at Boston University School of Theology, 745 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02215; telephone: 617/358-0909; e-mail: ccrd@bu.edu



On the staff of AHSC this year are...

Sara Purdom,

a second-year MTS candidate. Her assignment in the Shaw Center makes full use of her organizing, motivational, and creative skills, as she concentrates on executing tasks associated with the Center's annual preaching event — **Women and the Word** and the weekly Shaw Center brown bag lunches.

This former United Methodist missionary hails from Mountain View, Arkansas. Her work has taken her to Houston, Texas, where she spent two years in the mission field, and to Johannesburg, South Africa, where she spent one year. She has also spent the past two summers as director of the YMCA Downtown Houston Summer Day Camp.

A 1995 graduate of Hendrix College, Sara holds a BA in psychology. Her MTS studies focus on social ethics, and she plans further studies in social work with a concentration in the administration and planning of nonprofits.

Sara is pursuing deacon's orders in the United Methodist church.

Laurel E. Scott,

a first-year MDiv candidate, pursuing elder's orders in the United Methodist church. Born in Barbados, Laurel has spent the last twenty-six years living, working, and going to school in New York City.

A community activist and organizer, Laurel was active in local politics in Brooklyn where she lived. She received a BA degree from Brooklyn College where her honors project was in speech communications. She received a Master of Public Administration degree with a concentration in public and nonprofit Management from New York University.

Laurel has held senior management positions in the New York City Human Resources Administration. She has worked in education — classroom instruction and curriculum development for the educationally disadvantaged; and service delivery to and programming for victims of sexual assault, family violence, child abuse and neglect, the homeless and single mothers on welfare.

Having worked in the print media, Laurel brings those skills to bear in the Shaw Center by working on the newsletter and on other tasks related to communications and operations.

Assuming The Mantle

"You've been given all that you need. You're on your own now. Stand on your own two feet."

Those words resounded as clearly in my head as though the speaker had been standing in my room right next to me. But there was no one here with me — at least no one I could see. As I looked out over the galvanized rooftops, past the pastel-colored houses to the pink-colored clouds heralding the morning sun, I became aware of a mantle of responsibility falling softly on my shoulders.

I was reacting to the news that my mother had just broken to me on the telephone. "Laurel," she said, "I have some sad news for you. Rex is dead. He died this morning of a heart attack. The funeral is Thursday. You have to come home."

Rex has been a substitute father for me ever since my biological father died eighteen years previously. He had been a spiritual guide. He had been

the first one to identify gifts and graces that had been developing in me, and had said to me over the years that there was a special call on my life — a debt that I owed to God and to my people that I could not escape.

Periodically he would say to me: "Aren't you ready yet? It's time for ordination. Let me know when you're ready." I would shrug and say, "I'm not so sure..." He never saw my gender. That I was a woman did not matter to him. He simply knew there were talents that I had to share with God's people.

The answer to my unspoken question, which drove me to the window of my second floor apartment in the south-eastern corner of the beautiful island in the Caribbean where I was born, had come in response to a question I had asked myself, "What do I do now?"

"You're on your own. You've been given enough." That's something Rex might say. Short. Pithy. Profound. True.

I made plans to return to New York, breathing deeply the fresh salty air that drifted over the seaside village where I vacationed with my cousins. Okay. One day earlier than I had planned — that's not too much to sacrifice, I reasoned. Rex was always reasonable. God was reasonable, too!

It was also the last time that I would see my paternal grandmother alive. When I returned to Barbados just seven weeks later, at the end of January, it would be to eulogize her, and to confirm what was now becoming very clear to me. It was time for me to answer the call to ministry. It was time for me to assume the mantle, take on a special responsibility, carry the torch to the next generation. One generation was passing. It was now my time. Like Jonah the reluctant prophet, I tenuously approached the necessary changes that I had to make, as conditions around me became increasingly troublesome. Even though I was reluctant to admit it, I was ready. I had been prepared. I had been given enough.



Meet The Co-Chairs of the

When the advisory board of the Anna Howard Shaw Center decided to change the direction of the center to make it more appealing to a wider variety of women, one of the actions taken in pursuit of that vision was a change in the governing structure and operating protocol of the center. This has resulted in a governing structure with a different look and different operating dynamics.

The advisory board is now headed by Co-Chairs, rather than by a Chairperson and Vice Chair as in the past.

Shirley Hoover has been a member of the Anna Howard Shaw Center for the past sixteen years. She describes her relationship with the center, which stretches back to her own graduation, as evolving through "several incarnations." Since the Board was formed in 1985, Shirley has held a variety of posts, including those of president, secretary and financial chair. Since June of this year, she has been co-chairperson with MT Dávila. As a graduate of the School of Theology and one of the longest-serving members of the board, the Reverend Mrs. Hoover has much seasoned experience and an admirable grasp of the institutional history of the Anna Howard Shaw Center.

One of her earliest and most positive memories is associated with the institutionalization of "Women and the Word" — the annual conference sponsored by the center. Shirley recalls that in 1984 Margaret Wiborg, the current director, participating in her first retreat, asked participants what, as clergywomen, they would like to see. The consensus was "clergywomen preaching." From that vision, the Women and the Word conference was born.

Shirley has lived through several changes in her own life and has seen many changes occur within the center. She embraces this change to the vision of a center that incorporates and reflects a greater diversity of women than it has in the past. She looks forward to the center embracing women of all races and ethnicities, from all parts of the country and the world, from other denominations, and of all ages. She recognizes the need for a changing of the guard at the center; and feels that her own wisdom and knowledge is limited.

The emphasis at the Anna Howard Shaw Center is slowly shifting, as it must, to a multi-cultural, inclusive one. Thus it is entering a world that is unfamiliar to many older women, a world in which they did not grow up. Some may feel uncomfortable about this change, but Shirley Hoover wants to be as helpful as she can in helping to move the center in that direction. She rejoices in seeing the new energy in the younger women.



Something Shirley would like to see is a movement of the center to expand its circle of operation outside of Boston to the region, perhaps as far as Northern New Hampshire. For example, to offer evening Women's lectures, led by women professors, on womanist/feminist theology. The driving idea behind this would be to bring the School of Theology to women in the suburbs.

Northern New Hampshire is where Shirley now serves, and she is very much aware of how isolated that part of the region can become. Even in the early fall, while it is still relatively warm, preparations are going on for the winter. The hay is all in and the vegetables have been harvested, canned, and bottled. These are people "on the fringes". They are geographically isolated. Despite the isolation, she asks "How can we reach the women — the women of the UMW and clergywomen — who are "on the fringes"?"

She feels that the center can be a powerful influence on the church, if it can pool and direct the power of those women currently on the fringes. One

vehicle through which this can be accomplished is Women and the Word. This, she says, provides a great opportunity to see and meet people. In some years, women have come from all over the country to participate in this conference. The conference needs to incorporate what she calls "frontier theology": it needs to be a "cutting edge" conference, each year, every year.

"If we are going to get anywhere," says Shirley, "we need to look to common experiences we have as women — birth, marriage, and children — to develop our understanding of God. We can also advocate for women clergy, recognizing that being a clergywoman is not an easy road." She believes that young clergywomen are in for a surprise, even though things in the region are improving.

Shirley has had plenty of experience as a pioneering woman. She has had the experience of being the "first female" to do several things, most of them challenging. The most remarkable thing about her is that despite her setbacks, she shows remarkable resilience. Fifteen years ago, Shirley Hoover suffered a heart attack at a time when the medical community considered heart attacks among women to be a rarity. That hasn't slowed her down. She still, however, feels the effects of the death of her husband. She has also had a few difficult pastoral assignments, "But," she says, "I'm a survivor."

Shirley says she works hard at not being too pushy, even though her detractors might still say she is. When she decides there is something to be done, she does it.

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Shaw Center Advisory Board

MT Dávila accepted the position of co-chair in June '99, signaling a new era for the center. MT is one of the younger members of the board and is a Roman Catholic who was born in Puerto Rico.

Born into a household where a strongly held family value was that a good education would lead to a successful life regardless of one's economic situation, MT Dávila has carried that passion for education throughout her life.

She came to Boston University in 1995, as a student in the Master of Divinity program, intending to do campus ministry. Along the way, MT switched to the MTS program to focus more on theological studies, graduating with that degree this past spring. Before the end of this journey she decided to accept the position of alumni officer for the School of Theology in December 1996 and completed her studies part time.

From her native Puerto Rico, MT's journey to BUSTH and to the Co-chairpersonship of the Anna Howard Shaw Center came by way of Providence, Rhode Island, where she

completed her bachelor's degree at Brown University, assisted the Catholic chaplain on campus, and taught Spanish at junior high and high schools.

Her passion for education continues to be expressed in her work at BUSTH and in the voluntary chairmanship of the Shaw Center. She is particularly concerned that students become vigilant about education policy — particularly involving higher education and access to it. She believes we must be ever vigilant because of the subtle ways in the past in which access to higher education was often limited by lawmakers.

Her vision of the Shaw Center is that it



becomes an even louder voice for social justice than it has been in the past, that it be an agitating presence among university students and those within the School of Theology and that ways can be found in which its constituents can express their

concerns about social justice issues, such as the lack of food and access to food for women and their families across the globe. MT believes that because of the relative affluence of North American women, critical concerns about global hunger have been eased into the background. Even though she acknowledges that we might be limited in what we can do, she nevertheless believes that our spirits need not be confined. We can reflect and draw attention to the plight of the dispossessed. She sees that the Shaw Center can move in this direction.

From the global to the local, MT dreams of a Boston University Press, as there once was, or at least a close affiliation of the University to a press, that could print urgent works by students and faculty. A web site -- a full-time active web site through which "all sorts of information" can be posted and where students and others can communicate, is another of MT's dreams. "With this device", says MT "we can get information out there so that all who need it can have access to it."

Shirley Hoover continued from P. 4

She endured a divorce in 1977 and regrets that the church was not there for her, but she uses this as an opportunity to shine the light on ways in which the church should pay attention to people who are good Christians, but who experience difficulties in life. She feels that someone needs to translate the language of theologians to make it accessible to regular people.

She thought she could do this by being a teacher of history. After pursuing this dream for a year, she realized that this was not where she ought to be. She worked with the League of Women Voters and raised three children. She got divorced, because at that time she couldn't do what she was doing (pioneering work) and still be married.

Before she came into the ministry, Shirley Hoover gained a bachelor's degree in political science and history and a master's degree in education. She has been pastor of two Methodist churches in Monroe, New Hampshire, since July, and has been co-chairperson of the Anna Howard Shaw Center board of directors since June. She still has a lot to give.



Here's how you can help reflect a diversity of cultures in the Shaw Center



One of the ways in which we are seeking to reflect the diversity of our center is through the art-work and decorations that adorn the walls and shelves of the center.

The Anna Howard Shaw center is inviting donations of paintings, wall-hangings, sculpture and other pieces of art which reflect the varieties of culture represented in the student body, alumnae and constituency of the Center.

If in the displays in the Center, you do not see your own culture represented, please discuss the object you wish to donate with Laurel Scott of the AHSC staff, and she will make arrangements for your contribution to be displayed and appropriately acknowledged.

You may contact her at the center — telephone 617/353-3075, or e-mail: shawcenter@bu.edu.



*Many, Many Thanks to You...***AHSC Donors July 1, 1998 through June 30, 1999**

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From the Director

Continued from p.1

Our work-study staff this year includes an African-Caribbean-American woman from New York City and an Anglo-American woman from Arkansas. Our new Shaw Scholar is from China.

The co-leaders of the Shaw Advisory Board are an Anglo-American woman from New England and a Puerto-Rican woman. Women from a number of different countries participated in our Fall Women's Retreat. Our time was rich, as some of our stereotypes shattered and we began to get to know one another.

At our Advisory Board Retreat, we continued to work on becoming more open to change and more aware of the diversity among us. In preparation for the retreat we read *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*, an enjoyable and insightful novel by Julia Alvarez

about sisters from an upper-class family in the Dominican Republic and their experience as immigrants to the United States. Lai Fan Wong, our new Shaw Scholar, shared her background and study plans with us. On Saturday morning we worked with the team from Visions who are helping us in our study and planning. In our worship, our leader shared from an article by Diana Eck on pluralism. We learned that "pluralism is not diversity alone, but the energetic engagement of that diversity... Pluralism will require not just tolerance, but the active seeking of understanding ... and that pluralism is not simply relativism. It means holding our differences, not in isolation, but in relationship. The language of pluralism is that of dialogue and encounter, give and take."

Because of the work we are doing, I now intentionally sit down at lunch with someone I do not know. I listen and appreciate differently. I recall a graceful exchange in the class I am

auditing, when an international student realized that "match girls" actually sold matches and not themselves. I remember a conversation on the dilemma of hospitality when we realized that true hospitality is not only showering strangers with our fanciest foods, but also providing the rice and beans they are used to for their digestive tract's sake. We have so much to learn.

In a country that is increasingly diverse and in a world where we live increasingly in a global context, how do each of us as individuals and as members of various communities embrace the possibilities open to us in our diversity?

As we prepare for a new century, is it possible that one of our resolutions for this New Year might be to "energetically engage" with the diversity all around us — for our sake and that of the world!



Fall Retreat '99

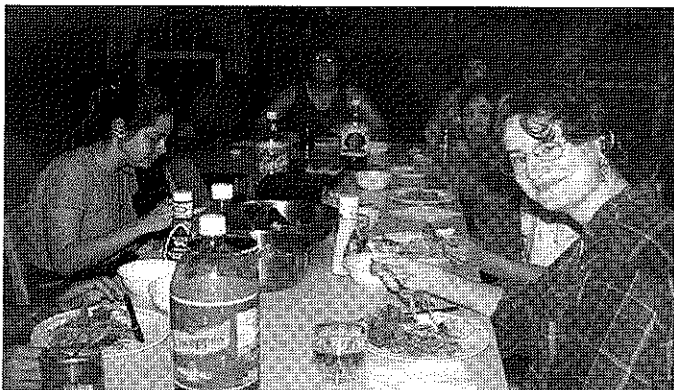
South Africa, crosses, a pencil, a Bible, rings, "the keeper," a stuffed panda, dried flowers, pictures representing loved ones, and, one of my favorites, a fertility statue. This statue was a crude image of a woman painfully giving birth. Her breasts were prominent and the head of her child was frozen just outside the birth canal – a reminder that with pain and

Sustainer of Life; and black for the west where the sun must set in order to rise again. All were reminders of the essential sacrifice and suffering that evoke change and new life.

During my reflection time on Saturday, while sitting on a partially shaded picnic table writing in my journal, I had

need a breath, lower yourself to the ground and there you will find breath from the earth." She found that she could suck air from the earth. "It was refreshing and amazing", she reported.

Margaret continued to talk about the clay, expressing her amazement at what she had been able to form in the past, and what had been expressed through pieces of earth. She shared how molding clay had helped her, therapeutically. As she spoke, we took clay out of the plastic bag and set it on the newspaper. As she continued to share, I noticed that the section of the paper on which she was molding clay was printed the word, 'INSIGHT', in bold capital letters. After I pointed that out to her, she directed my attention to the side heading which read, "Hope Springs Again: A Time of Celebration for the Faithful." The paper was dated



Eating is a very important part of any activity. The participants at left seem very pleased with the meal.

struggle comes creation, new life. The owner of the statue told us that it had been broken many times, and that the first time it broke, she cried. Then she realized that the statue had additional symbolism in that although she had broken it repeatedly, it had been repeatedly mended.

The statue proved to be an especially significant image to the women in the room. By sharing our items of sacred worth, we also brought our experiences of sacred worth, which were linked by a common theme – we must struggle to bring new life to anything.

This deeply spiritual and religious theme wove experiences and traditions interconnecting my own understanding of several traditions with the various understandings of traditions offered by the women who shared this experience with me. In my own reflection, I thought of the Indians cleansing, ritualizing, and cremating together at the banks of the Ganges River in Varanasi; I thought of the death and resurrection that is at the core of Christianity; I thought of the Sun Dance of the Native Americans and the gratitude they share for the life sacrificed so that they might live. I thought of the four colors of directions: red for the south and the way of the red people, white for the north, from where the snow comes; yellow for the east, the sun and the

Creativity, too, played its part as we molded clay into interesting shapes. In the photo at right, women sculpt clay and talk about possible uses for their creations.



an intriguing experience. We were about to mold clay. I stopped journaling to watch Margaret bring out a small stack of newspaper and clay in a plastic bag. She was saying that she gets very excited when she works with clay – molding, shaping, creating. "You have to get dirty to create," she said. "Clay is of the earth and so our creations will come also of the earth, but those creations will be expressed exclusively by each one of us."

The night before, I had spoken of my curiously connected journey this summer, from its start in India, to its end at a powwow. Afterwards, another participant had shared her experience of a sweat lodge. She told me that the air had gotten exceptionally thick, making breathing difficult. The people who accompanied her told her, "If you

April 4, 1999 – the celebration of Easter. It seemed most appropriate, given our environment and my understanding of the retreat.

I admit that the past couple of weeks have been rather scary for this entering seminarian, and I do not expect relief from this strange new feeling anytime soon. The women's retreat allowed me to join in the depth of experience, courage, and creative spirituality of the women with whom I shared this event and who continue to surround me. Now, my hands are coarse with the hardened clay.

I am thankful for this grounding; I am grateful for this new life.



Lady from the Land of Transylvania Living The Mission

Dr. Judit Gellér

God has blessed me with many talents and with a keen sense of responsibility to make them yield many fruits. "Become what you can be!" has been my life's principle. In this sense I don't feel that my childhood and youth were wasted by investing them in the hard discipline of music training. The call to alleviate suffering urged me to choose medicine as a career, and neurology and psychiatry as my specializations, which most resembled ministry. At that time in my country women were not trained for ministry. The logical choice of study for me at that time was medicine.

Since my childhood, Albert Schweitzer and my minister father, Dr. Imre Gellér have been my role models. And an overwhelming sense of love for God and for people has inspired my decisions and actions of service for others. Service is my true religion. The core principle I have followed when I changed careers was always to give the maximum of my capacity, to optimize the way of service — the "here I am Lord, send me!" principle.

I grew up under communist totalitarianism as a member of an oppressed and persecuted minority, but I rejected the role of victim. Being Transylvanian Hungarian in Romania compares with being a Tibetan in China. This realization and the struggle to maintain our cultural-religious identity has fundamentally determined my life-tasks. To demonstrate that excellence and fierce determination can occasionally defy political-social obstacles — even in communism, even as an openly religious person, the daughter of a martyred father — was my call. To carry on my father's broken dream is my life's task.

I am reluctant to surrender to impossibility when a worthy cause is at stake. Hardship and hard work have never discouraged me; in fact I typically chose a more difficult path any time I modified the course of my life. For me, this struggle itself holds as

much meaning as reaching the goal.

I have always lived in a Christian and ecumenical environment and spirit. My mother and brother are Roman Catholic and my grandparents were Calvinist. After emigrating to Hungary I joined the country's main Roman Catholic cathedral choir. For twenty years this church was my spiritual home. I can describe my religious life as Unitarian and Catholic.

There was nothing quite as fulfilling as being a physician — especially in Eastern Europe. Medicine was for the idealist as the most complex form of service. I played my violin in psychiatric wards at Christmas, and, for six years, in a cancer research neurology department. I stood at the bedside of dying patients, praying with them in their last hours. In a communist country religious service for the dying and the presence of clergy would not have been welcomed. Younger patients had no religious background; but in their ultimate existential crisis in a desolate, inhumane hospital they needed someone to hold their hands, look into their frightened eyes, and help them die in God's peace.

While this was spiritually a highly satisfying medical career, I was always longing for theological education. But in my culture a medical profession was thought to be lifelong.

I met my husband, Dr. George M. Williams, a Californian and professor of Asian religions in 1987 during an international congress at Stanford University, married him in 1988, and moved to Chico, California. With this new empowerment, a new call arose: to try to rescue and revitalize my father's church and mine in my homeland, devastated by communism. As a full-time volunteer for ten years, I have created the Unitarian Universalist (UU) Partner Church Movement, linking two times two hundred churches in covenant relationship in Transylvania and North America. I

have acquired a role of lay minister with a mission. One aspect of my work was guest preaching in UU churches all over North America and Canada. I have translated and published several books on Unitarianism. The latest and most important is my father's life scholarship — *A History of Transylvanian Unitarianism Through Four Centuries of Sermons*.

The Partner Church Movement has revitalized the Transylvanian Unitarian church morally and economically and protected it politically. In the process, North American participating congregations have experienced an unprecedented spiritual transformation as a result of meaningful involvement in partnership. I serve as founding general secretary of the Partner Church Council, which has been recognized by UUA president Dr. John Buehrens as "the largest and most significant grassroots movement of the century for Unitarian Universalists in America, which keeps the denomination healthy." In 1994 I was awarded an honorary doctorate by Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, California, and in 1999 received the distinguished service award.

I view my ministry mostly in a global, international context. I wish to build bridges between traditions and to work for religious understanding and dialogue. I see myself as a potentially effective ambassador for human rights.

I consider it a great privilege and joy to be a student at Boston University in the MTS program. I have a new sense of call in academia. I wish to deal with my medical and musical background responsibly and to integrate them with theology. Writing is becoming my voice, slowly replacing activism.

Everywhere I go, I try to share anything I learn with my people. The calls are manifold. Sowing more seeds is my goal.



News About STH Women...

Sharon Burch has been very active on the conference/seminar circuit, participating in two gatherings in the Fall.

At the United Methodist Group called "Shared Focus on Youth Ministry", Professor Burch talked about the work she is doing with a young adult group at United Parish and how that endeavor supports her work and teaching in religious education at Boston University. She was part of a group of representatives from thirteen United Methodist Seminaries from around the country, gathered at Simpsonwood, GA. They described what their seminaries were doing to promote youth ministry. Descriptions of projects ranged from major programs, such as those funded by the Lily Endowment that are devoted to training of youth for ministry to youth, at Claremont School of Theology in California and Emory University in Atlanta, to coursework offered, ordinarily under the rubric of religious education, at smaller schools throughout the country.

Following the initial presentations, other attendees were asked questions, presented concerns, and made suggestions about the programs. The discussions provided insight into the national scope of the ministry to youth in the UMC: the positive energy and the thoughtfulness that are being put into this area, the need for greater numbers of staff people dedicated to this form of ministry, and the lack of intentional training readily available to people who are already doing the work. The gathering also heard from youth ministers and learned of programs in place in various regions of the country.

Sharon reports that it was a rewarding interchange that left few of the attendees unchanged by the content shared and the reflections that ensued.

She was equally enthusiastic about the meeting of the Association of Professors and Researchers of Religious Education in Toronto, Canada, where she presented a paper. The theme for that meeting was:

"Religious Particularity in a Pluralistic Age." It was anchored by a group of Catholics and Jews who had been meeting for six years to work out issues of particularism and pluralism under the direction of Mary C. Boys of the Union Theological seminary and Sasa Lee, of the Hebrew Union Theological School.

In addition to the plenary sessions workshops offered participants the chance to discuss works in progress.

About this meeting Sharon said: "Their witness, comprehensive engagement with the topic, and heartfelt participation in the process provided a spirited, cohesive, enriching commentary on how such a dialogue should take place. I was particularly impressed because these scholars brought their carefully wrought attempts to think things through before their peers, and then asked those attending to lend their wisdom to the questions that were the most critical to their arguments. It had been a long time since I was in the company of fellow educators, and watching how my colleagues invited collaboration and involvement with the topic at hand was a pleasure!"



By the time this appears, Sharon will have presented a paper on the topic "*Identifying and Describing a Theology of Culture*" for the religious and Pop Culture Group of the American Academy of Religion. In this paper, she will consider Tillich's call for a "theology of culture" that provides the theological endeavor with information that is on par with Biblical studies, church history, and systematic theology. Given the importance of those three subjects, she asked, "In what way could the theology of culture possibly be comparable?" Her answer to this question concerns the hermeneutic nature of all inquiry, the inability to separate the sacred and the secular, and the anthropological make-up of

humanity as capable of knowing the transcendent, the sacred, and the holy.

After receiving a small grant from the Wabash Center to hold a consultation for persons interested in the integration of psychology and religion/spirituality, *Carole Bahn* invited participants representing three different groups: liberal Protestant, Catholic, Jewish groups, (who make their homes at Boston University), Evangelical Christians (eg, at Fuller), and psychologists interested in religious issues. She invited them to a meeting to get acquainted, learn about one another's teaching methods and presuppositions, and consider some joint projects.

Even though they are all doing the same basic work, the participants belong to different professional groups, publish in different journals, and read different literature. As a result of this meeting, the group has put together two panels for annual meetings (the American Association of Pastoral Counseling and the American Psychological Association) and are planning to gather again in the near future to continue their efforts to bridge the gaps and work on a common endeavor.

Carole and her colleagues are very excited about the possibilities!

A passionate speaker on the issues of bioethics, *Jensine Andresen* had a summer of "**Bioethics and the Church**" activities. In early June, she hosted the "Issues for the Millennium: Cloning and Genetic Technologies" conference here at BU and later that month participated in the Bishop's Consultation on Bioethics sponsored by the Anglican Church at Washington National Cathedral.

Later in the summer, she spoke on bioethics at the 'Pastors' Assembly' of the United Methodist Church in New Hampshire.



...News About STH Women

Carrie Doehring gave a paper on using films in teaching pastoral theology, and showed the film *Breaking the Waves* at the Society for Pastoral Theology in Denver, Colorado, on June 20.

She also attended two Wabash consultations: one in Denver on June 15—16, on Pastoral Theology, and one organized by the Danielsens Institute at BU on Cape Cod in August 17, 18, 19, on the Integration of Clinical Psychology and Religion. (Refer to Carol Bohn's news on this, above).



Dana Robert was installed as the Truman Collins Professor of World Mission during a service in Marsh Chapel on December 9, 1999. The first woman in STH to be tenured (1990), Professor Robert was awarded the endowed chair during the Fall semester. The chair derives from money given in 1912 by a lumberman, Truman Collins, who endowed the first mission department in a Methodist seminary. The Collins money paid for mission professors during the 1920s, but somehow faded out after that (lost during the Depression?)

Dean Neville performed the installation during the chapel service at which

Professor Robert also preached the sermon.

Last summer Professor Robert gave a response to a paper at a conference in Oxford, England on *Currents in World Christianity*. In June she gave the address to the Fourth Historical Convocation of the United Methodist Church. In June she preached for the Louisiana Annual Conference.

In September Professor Robert delivered the McClure Lectures in Missions at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary; and in November she was guest professor at the E. Stanley Jones School of Mission and Evangelism at Asbury Theological Seminary.

Here's How you can help carry on Anna's work...



The Anna Howard Shaw Center at Boston University School of Theology seeks to support women in ministry through the center's research, education, support, and advocacy. If you would like to learn more about the Anna Howard Shaw Center, please fill out this form and return it to the address below. Thank you for supporting women in ministry!

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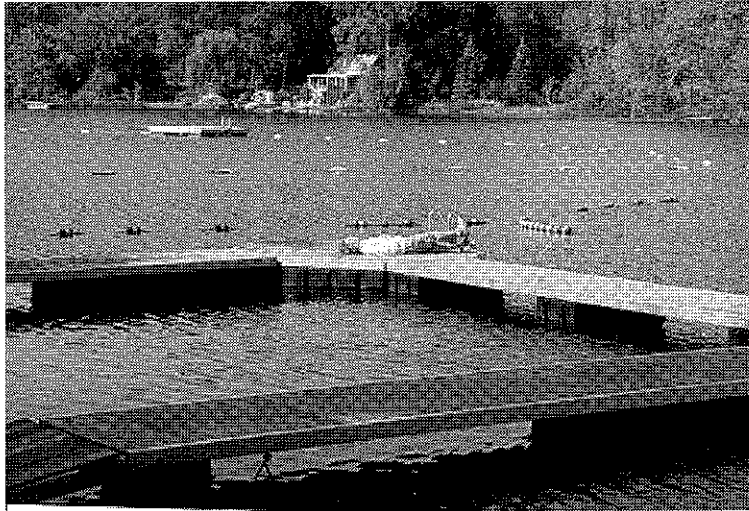
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After heavy rain and gusty winds on the Friday night of the Fall Retreat, Saturday dawned clear, bright and warm. In the photo above, one of the women relaxes on the jetty, enjoying the serenity, solitude and beauty of the environs.

**Anna Howard Shaw
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